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NND 969042

By fst Date 2 June '98

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Subj: Nigeria Sitrep, 1300 Hours EST, Jan 15

1. POLITICAL/MILITARY: A five-man Biafran peace delegation, including ~~Sir Louis Mbanefo and Major General Effiong~~ arrived in Sir Louis Mbanefo and Major General Effiong, arrived Lagos Jan. 14. At end of first round of talks with Gen. Gowon, Effiong today issued statement accepting "the existing and federal structure of Nigeria" and affirming Ibo loyalty to Federal Government. He said "Republic of Biafra" no longer exists. Gowon responded with assurances FMG will honor all guarantees offered to "our Eastern brothers", including general amnesty.

Hostilities appear to have virtually ceased in war zone. Preliminary report from Canadian member International Observer Group,

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which has just returned Lagos after inspection of southern sector, reconfirms yesterday's British observer report that Federal Army and Nigerian Red Cross units have moved in quickly to feed reguess. Observer Group found no evidence atrocities having been committed by either side.

In statement released today in Geneva, former Biafran leader Odumegwu Ojukwu repeated his charges of genocide and urged those powers "who have armed and helped Nigeria" persuade Gowon accept external aid offered to feed hungry. He asserted that Biafra had not lost war and it would survive. Ojukwu's whereabouts are still uncertain.

UN Sec-Gen U Thant has appealed to OAU President Ahidjo reactivate Consultative Committee on Nigeria to help facilitate national reconciliation.

2. Relief: Federal Government issued statement late last night saying it "is contacting number of friendly governments on immediate requirements for relief in affected areas to supplement national effort." (British Government has received request from Gowon for provision of fifty Land Rovers,

~~Rebxxxx~~ fifty 5-ton and twenty 10-ton trucks, six 800-ton coastal

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boats, and medical personnel and supplies. Half of the Land Rovers and 5-tonners may be sent by air.) FMG statement also blacklisted four governments and five relief agencies from whom further aid will not be accepted: France, Portugal, South Africa, Rhodesia, ~~Joint~~ Joint Church Aid, Caritas, French Red Cross, Nordic Red Cross, and Canair. In addition, "all foreign relief workers who operated illegally in secessionist enclave" were declared persona non grata.

USG is continuing urgent consultations with FMG officials regarding our offers of emergency assistance and expects be informed of their specific requirements tomorrow.

According to statement issued yesterday in Geneva by LICROSS, Nigerian Red Cross teams are operating in almost all "liberated" areas, including Owerri, Aba, Umuahia, and Ikot Ekpene. Teams are expected arrive soon in heartland of former enclave--areas of Orlu, Oruta and Ihiala.

If FMG approval received, ICRC plans airlift Danish Red Cross medical supplies to Nigeria. Two aircraft with combined capacity of 21 tons are being readied take off today.

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Newly appointed British Coordinator for Relief, Lord Hunt, due in Lagos today to discuss offers of external assistance. Meanwhile, Maurice Foley of British Foreign Office proceeding Rome for purpose encouraging Pope Paul reestablish good relations with Gowon.

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